NATURE CONSERVATION NEWS

Volume 8 - Number 1
April 1958

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE
LIBRARY
NEW LONDON, CONN.
APR 30 '58
STACKS

ON THE MAKING OF SCIENTISTS

> "A scientist is born every time a youth is first fired with curiosity concerning the wonders of the world about him."
>
> *N.Y. Times editorial, Nov. 27, 1957*

Many of today's leaders in the biological sciences and medicine had their original interest in living things sparked in their youth by exposure to the world of nature under circumstances that aroused their curiosity and gave them an opportunity to satisfy it through personal observation. This habit of seeking answers directly from the observation of nature rather than from experts or books is the essential characteristic that distinguishes the true scientist from the technician. Unlike facts and techniques it cannot be taught but must arise from childhood experiences that stimulate a spirit of inquiry and gradually give a youngster confidence in his own ability to observe the phenomena of nature accurately and reason from facts so obtained.

It is no exaggeration to say that a small patch of readily accessible wild nature can play a greater part in creating future scientists than the finest school buildings in America. The world our children live in today is such a highly artificial one where everything is controlled by or dependent on man that the child's first contact with wild nature is often a very exciting experience. Because of its novelty the impact of the experience may be such as to indelibly impress itself on the child's memory and influence his whole life. Such an experience makes a child suddenly aware of a fascinating world of life completely independent of man, inhabited by living creatures each of which is working out the problem of survival utterly oblivious of human existence. Curiosity about their lives usually follows and if the community has had the foresight to preserve a few wild areas that are reasonably accessible to the child he will begin to explore them on his own and get acquainted with their inhabitants.

Especially lucky is the boy or girl who has near his home examples of all the different communities of native plants and animals that occupy each different type of local terrain. Each region has its own distinctive "spectrum" of biotic communities occupying sites from wet to dry or fertile to infertile. If local samples of each have been preserved, they confront the interested youngster with a host of questions about the attributes and adaptations that make each species uniquely suited to occupy the place where it occurs naturally. Because they pose such questions and because the answers are to be found in the areas themselves, a series of natural areas that have never been "managed" by man can be priceless assets in the never ending task of stimulating youngsters to seek their own answers to the riddles of nature and in time to become scientists.

Richard H. Pough

MOSS LAKE TO BE DEDICATED

Moss Lake with bog, surrounding woods, and fields will be acquired as an inviolate nature preserve by the Western New York Chapter of the Nature Conservancy. The chairman, Mr. Axel Heilborn of Niagara Falls, N.Y., reports that a contract has been signed to purchase the property from its present owner. May 24 has been set as the date of formal transfer. A meeting and dedication of the tract will take place on the property at that time.

This lovely spot, with its interesting flora and wildlife is located in Allegany County between Rushford and Houghton. Biologists and bird watchers in Western New York have long been acquainted with the charming lake, and it has for many years been used as an outdoor biological laboratory by nearby Houghton College.

The bog abounds in April with white leatherleaf flowers. In May it is rosy with bog laurel, in June it is purple-red from the leaves of sundew and the blossoms of pitcher plant, and in July the brilliant yellow bladderwort is conspicuous.

Moss Lake and the adjacent territory provides homes for many species of birds and mammals. Many ducks and other migrating birds stop there in spring and fall.

Mr. Heilborn reports that about $11,000 has been raised, covering the initial purchase. Some additional funds will be needed to complete the development of the preserve.

The Western New York Chapter of the Nature Conservancy was organized on July 17, 1957. Members of the Board of Trustees are: Harold D. Mitchell, Williamsville, N. Y.; Miss Frances N. Rew, Buffalo, N.Y.; H. Everest Clements, Rochester, N.Y.; Dr. Arthur W. Lynip, Dean of Houghton College; Prof. Crystal L. Rork of Houghton, N.Y.; Miss Mabel H. James of Holland, N.Y.; Mrs. W. W. Brockner, Buffalo, N.Y.; and Mr. Heilborn.

FIELD STAFF

Mr. Paul Bruce Dowling commenced work as Nature Conservancy field representative in the Central States January 1. Mr. Dowling was formerly a wildlife biologist with the Missouri Conservation Commission. He helped organize the Missouri Chapter of the Conservancy and served as its first secretary.

Mr. Dowling has set up an office at 9827 Clayton Road, St. Louis 17. His phone numbers are WYdown 3-6060 (office) and BElmont 2-4278 (home). He is devoting his efforts in particular to the north-central and great plains states, aiming at formation of chapters in the more populous states and development of a council or committee to promote preservation activities in the plains states. A primary objective of his efforts will be to preserve grassland areas.

Mr. William Drake, the Conservancy's western representative, continues to develop an amazing number of projects and activities. Working with him is the Western Advisory Board under the chairmanship of Mr. Edward N. Munns. Progress reports on the western program will appear in future issues of Nature Conservation News. Mr. Drake has established a new office at 1711 Grove Street, Berkeley 9. Phone numbers are THornwall 1-4761 (office) and DRake 6-4694 (home).

With two field representatives now at work, the Conservancy is becoming truly national in scope. This is just a good beginning though, and it is imperative that we follow up as soon as possible with representatives for the northeastern, southeastern, and mountain-plains regions.

URBAN SPRAWL

In recent months there has been most heartening evidence of awakening to the effect of urban sprawl on the American landscape.

FORTUNE for January carried a prominent feature article by William H. Whyte, Jr. titled "Urban Sprawl". A companion piece, "The City's Threat to Open Land", appeared in ARCHITECTURAL FORUM for January.

These two magazines recently sponsored a round table discussion of this problem by leaders in the field and the articles report on this. The round table group recommended a direct action program by state governments, including outright purchase of land, advance acquisition with lease back to former owner, purchase of development rights or easements, and acceptance of gifts, along with other forms of action.

In Massachusetts, a Citizens Committee for Open Spaces has been formed with our Massachusetts representative, Dr. George C. Shattuck, as chairman. The Committee has published an impressive folder on the problem as it pertains to Massachusetts. This Massachusetts effort may point the way to stimulation of programs in other states.

The time is at hand for the Nature Conservancy to take an active part in the effort to preserve open spaces. The round table conclusions provide a blueprint of what must be done and we should hire a person to head up our efforts toward putting the program into effect. This would have to be someone conversant with metropolitan planning and development and capable of working with the many interested organizations and agencies in these and such related fields as taxation, economics, and recreation. He would help initiate movements to establish state open-space programs. His activities could be set up as a distinct department of the Conservancy. While there would be close coordination of effort with other parts of the organization, much of the work would be separate from our usual functions and this activity would not need to dilute our primary efforts. To establish this program, we shall need additional funds. Our Greenbelt Fund, established some time ago by donations from Mr. C. M. Goethe, gives us a starting point and with the FORTUNE and FORUM articles setting the stage we should be able to secure additional financing for this activity.

George B. Fell

THE PAST FOR THE FUTURE

The February issue of MISSOURI CONSERVATIONIST, published by the Missouri Conservation Commission, has an article by John L. Funk titled "The Past for the Future, the Story of the Nature Conservancy." This is an excellent account of the need for natural area preservation and the work of the Missouri Chapter, and it constitutes one of the best publicity pieces the Conservancy has ever had.

We need similar efforts in other states. Most state conservation departments have periodicals and their editors are eager to obtain good material. Perhaps you could write such an article for your state. You may obtain a copy of "The Past for the Future" by writing Paul Bruce Dowling, 9827 Clayton Road, St. Louis 17.

GREAT FALLS OF THE POTOMAC

To aid in the efforts of its Great Falls Committee to preserve the wild area on the Virginia side of the Great Falls of the Potomac, the Nature Conservancy has just published a very attractive and informative booklet, available on request to members. This booklet, entitled "Washington's Potowmack Canal Project at Great Falls", is by one of our Virginia members, Mr. C. J. S. Durham. It describes the historical and natural values of this scenic area, on the gorge of the Potomac just above the Nation's Capital, and urges that the area of almost 900 acres be set aside, a large part of it for a natural history study area. Although of greatest benefit to local people, this area is of national interest as well, as is brought out in the booklet. It is owned by the Potomac Electric Power Company which is about to dispose of it.

MAN AGAINST NATURE

More than 100 species of wild creatures have died out in the last century and a half, and today 600 more seem doomed to extinction.

This picture of a disappearing animal kingdom was described in the January edition of the UNESCO COURIER, monthly journal of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. The entire issue is devoted to an exposition of the effect of man on nature. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources aided in its preparation.

Scope of the publication can be seen from such provocative titles as: "The tale of the golden egg: threats to nature's delicate balance"; "Last refuge: where animals no longer walk in fear"; "Fossils of tomorrow: some living relics among today's animals"; "Galapagos: Noah's Ark in the Pacific"; and "The gentle little goat: arch despoiler of the earth".

PLAY AREAS FOR CHILDREN

If given the opportunity, children seem to prefer playing anywhere but in the kinds of city playgrounds that are most prevalent today. This is an inference one may draw from a study titled "Some Childhood Memories of the City" by Alvin Lukashok and Kevin Lynch, published in the Journal of the American Institute of Planners, Summer 1956. The study was based on interviews with adults regarding their childhood memories.

Some of the physical conditions the study showed to be enjoyable and stimulating to children are trees and foliage which offer shade and hiding places and can be climbed, space or freedom to move and lack of crowdedness, lawns or dirt which provide good play surfaces, hills and water areas, and big transportation vehicles.

Playgrounds, it would seem, should provide more than planned activities. They should have ample numbers of trees, open grass areas, hills, and water areas. They should also have wild or "waste" areas where children have some freedom to dig, build, hide, or use their imagination.

WM. L. HUTCHESON MEMORIAL FOREST

The July 1952 issue of NATURE CONSERVATION NEWS had a brief item titled: "In Jeopardy! - Mettler's Woods, near E. Millstone, N. J., uncut since 1690, is to be logged and sold". That article, which appeared after the trees had been marked for cutting, helped initiate the successful campaign to save the woods.

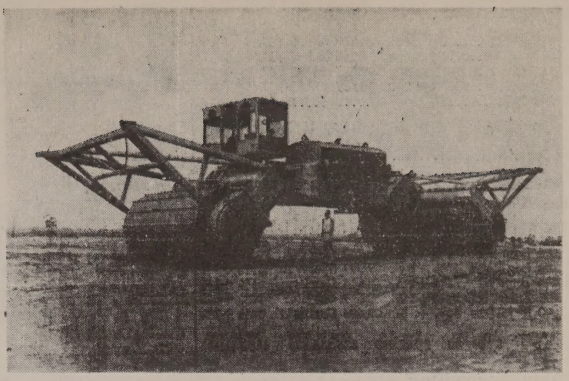
Mettler's Woods was formally dedicated as the William L. Hutcheson Memorial Forest on October 15, 1955. The forest was purchased by the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, and the deed was presented to Rutgers University. It was dedicated in honor of a former president of the Brotherhood. The approximately $56,000 that had been contributed by many persons has been set aside as a fund primarily to support research on the area.

A publication entitled, "The William L. Hutcheson Memorial Forest Bulletin - Dedication Issue" has been printed and is available at $1 per copy from the Director of the Forest. Everyone who has been interested in Mettler's Woods will want to have a copy. The booklet contains the dedication ceremonies which took place at the woods in the morning and the papers presented at the scientific program in the afternoon.

The funds which have been spent, mainly interest on the $56,000, have been used almost entirely in supporting research. Quite a number of research projects are actively under way, including a study of the salamanders, a soil survey of the area, a study of the alien species of plants, a complete inventory of the trees of the forest, and a study of the effect of the recent drought. One scientific paper "Plant Communities of Hutcheson Memorial Forest Based on Shrub Distribution" by Carl Monk has recently been published in Torreya. This includes a map of the vegetation of the forest. Reprints may be ordered for 25¢ through the Director of the Forest.

Guided tours of the woods are made at frequent intervals, and a schedule can be obtained from the Director of the Hutcheson Memorial Forest, Department of Botany, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

Murray F. Buell, Director



Electric Jungle Smasher

This 140-ton Diesel-electric monster, latest creation of R. G. LeTourneau, Inc., is called "one of the most brutal machines ever to leave an engineer's draft board." Its purpose: to help clean up the face of the earth. It can chew its way through a forest like a harnessed tornado. LeTourneau claims, ripping up trees by the roots and smashing them into splinters. The $190,000 jungle-wrecker is expected to play a big role in clearing millions of acres of land throughout the world for agricultural use.

"HELL'S HALF ACRE"

A determined fight is going on to spare a mile-long strip of wild land on the Charles River, in the heart of Cambridge, Massachusetts, from highway-building or other development. The 36-acre "neglected" tract of swamp and river bank has for many years served as a refuge for wildlife and a training ground for "apprentice naturalists". It is the only natural shoreline left along the Charles. Bernard DeVoto featured it in the "Easy Chair" in the September 1955 issue of HARPER'S.

Efforts to preserve the area have led to the introduction of a bill (Senate 415) in the Massachusetts General Court. This would authorize the Metropolitan District Commission to designate the area as the DeVoto Nature Reservation, to prohibit any road into the tract, and to accept funds from outside sources.

Those who would like to learn more about the situation, please get in touch with Mrs. George William Cottrell, 70 Lake View Avenue, Cambridge.

STEBBIN'S GULCH

The Holden Arboretum, near Cleveland, became the owner on December 16, 1957, of a 316-acre natural area including a ravine which has been termed one of the natural curiosities of northeastern Ohio.

The gulch is about 200 feet deep in places, so deep that the temperature on the hottest day is said to never go above 75°. Therefore it abounds in northern relic species of plants not ordinarily found in Ohio. There are fine stands of mountain maple, hemlock, Canada yew, black ash, and many other species. The geological strata exposed in the ravine are also of interest.

Stebbin's Gulch was given to the Arboretum by S. Livingston Mather, retired vice president of the Cleveland-Cliffs Iron Company. With this land, located in Geauga County, the arboretum now has more than 1,400 acres. The arboretum was originally established in 1912 by the will of Albert Fairchild Holden. It is anticipated the gulch will be maintained as a natural area preserve and used in particular by college classes in biology and geology. General public use will not be promoted until appropriate measures can be taken to reduce the hazard of falls.

THE BERGEN SWAMP PRESERVATION SOCIETY

For more than twenty years the Bergen Swamp Preservation Society, Inc., chartered under the Board of Regents of the State of New York as an educational institution in 1936, has been working toward the accomplishment of its charter which states as the purpose of the society: "to preserve inviolate for all time in their natural state the lands known as Bergen Swamp and such other swamps, forests and wild lands as may be suited to the purpose of the society; to conserve the flora and fauna of the lands owned by or under the control of the society; to offer to schools and colleges and other properly accredited students or groups of persons access to the swamps and forests of the society for the purpose of observation and study; to publish from time to time scientific and cultural information covering the biology and wildlife of the areas controlled by the society."

Among the concrete achievements of the society has been the acquisition of approximately nine hundred acres of the two thousand deemed advisable to maintain the swamp in its natural condition. This has been no light task as ascertaining owners of swamp parcels has taken hours of searching for land titles in Batavia, the county seat of Genesee County, in which the swamp is located. The search culminated in a map of the swamp with all parcels and their owners, as far as the county records could show, marked. Much more time has been spent by the property committee of the society following up the leads shown on the map and pursuing them to conclusion of purchases.

Educationally the trustees and members of the society have been giving talks about the swamp, its value and importance, ecology and wildlife to from 10 to 20 groups annually, especially in the Rochester area, but often far and wide throughout the state. Likewise members of the education committee and other trustees of the society have conducted from 10 to 15 groups through the swamp each year on observation and study trips. These have included classes from nearby schools and colleges as well as photography groups, hiking clubs, garden clubs, youth groups, church school groups and members. Some 19 publications dealing with the swamp, popularly and scientifically, have appeared in newspapers, bulletins, newsletters and magazines of national and state-wide circulation. The society has sponsored the publication of the major scientific work on the vegetation of the swamp. In progress, encouraged and sponsored by the society, is the writing of its early and past history by one of its trustees who was also a founding "mother" of the society in 1936.

The board of trustees of the society, consisting of from 12 to 15 members, meets regularly each month from September through June to conduct the business of the society and to further its purposes. Through the years the board has gratefully received the annual dues of members of the society which have helped greatly with the purchase of land. The board has also been fortunate from time to time to receive generous contributions from numerous organizations and individual donors toward the accomplishment of the ultimate goals of the society. As should be the case with such societies, the treasury is currently empty. But there is land to be bought if funds become available. Securing funds is the most persistent and pressing problem which the trustees face.

Recently through a different type of generosity, the Bergan Swamp Preservation Society, Inc. has broadened its scope of activity. It has become the steward of additional properties presented to it for their preservation as nature sanctuaries, inviolate for all time. One of these, the 100-acre George B. Taylor Memorial Marsh, just north of Honeoye Lake, was given to the society in memory of her husband by Mrs. George B. Taylor. The second has come to the society through the action of the school board of the town of Newark, New York, and the interest of Mr. Lyman Stuart of that city. This area is the famous Zurich Bog, an extremely interesting area botanically and ecologically, consisting of upland beech forest, swamp forests, open water ponds and marl and sphagnum bogs.

The society has accepted these new responsibilities with deep gratitude and high hope that the people of our state are becoming increasingly conscious of their obligations to future generations. We trust that there is a growing appreciation of the need to maintain natural areas as living museums for study and scientific investigation, spiritual and physical recreation and aesthetic enjoyment. It is the society's belief that places where man may see "Nature at work and learn some of her secrets" are indispensable for the education, satisfaction and inspiration of all people.

Babette Brown Coleman

The Nature Conservancy is an independent member-governed organization dedicated to saving America's heritage of wild nature. Its specific object is to preserve natural areas as "living museums" of the primeval wilderness. Such tracts are precious for their scientific, educational, and esthetic values. They also afford a home for the multitude of kinds of living things that would otherwise vanish from the earth, destroyed by our civilization.

The work of the organization began in 1917 under the direction of a committee of the Ecological Society of America. In 1946 the Ecologists Union was formed to take over these tasks. In 1950 its name was changed to the Nature Conservancy.

The members of the Nature Conservancy invite you to join in this work. Membership is open to both individuals and organizations. A contribution of $3 or more entitles you to annual membership, one of $100 or more to life membership and one of $1,000 or more to patron membership. Your contribution is an allowable income tax deduction.

NATURE CONSERVANCY

Main office: 4200 22nd Street, Northeast, Washington 18, D. C.
Phone: LAwrence 6-3413
Western Office: 1711 Grove Street, Berkeley 9, California
Central States Office: 9827 Clayton Road, St. Louis 17, Missouri

President:
RICHARD H. GOODWIN
Connecticut College
New London, Connecticut

Vice President:
ROBERT W. SCHERY
Marysville, Ohio

Secretary:
ELTING ARNOLD
Chevy Chase, Maryland

Treasurer:
G. FILIPPO GRAVATT
U. S. Plant Industry Station
Beltsville, Maryland

DURWARD L. ALLEN
Purdue University, Indiana

ERNEST BROOKS, JR.
Old Dominion Foundation

CONRAD CHAPMAN
Boston, Massachusetts

F. RAYMOND FOSBERG
Falls Church, Virginia

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

ALBERT M. FULLER
Milwaukee Public Museum

DEVIN A. GARRITY
The Devin-Adair Company

C. M. GOETHE
Sacramento, California

ROBERT J. HAMERSHLAG
Katonah, New York

WILLIAM HARD
New Canaan, Connecticut

PAUL A. HERBERT
East Lansing, Michigan

HERBERT W. LEVI
Harvard University

HERBERT A. McCULLOUGH
Howard College, Alabama

ERARD MATTHIESSEN
Stamford, Connecticut

MRS. FRED A. MAUNTEL
Washington, Missouri

THOMAS MORLEY
University of Minnesota

M. GRAHAM NETTING
Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh

RICHARD H. POUGH
Pelham, New York

ROBERT RIENOW
N. Y. State College
for Teachers, Albany

JAMES B. ROSS
Reinhold Publishing Corp., N. Y.

AARON J. SHARP
University of Tennessee

GEORGE C. SHATTUCK
Harvard Medical School

DANIEL SMILEY
Mohonk Lake, New York

ADOLPH M. STEBLER
Oklahoma Cooperative Wildlife
Research Unit, Stillwater

ALVIN G. WHITNEY
Delmar, New York